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*All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain natural and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness.*

-- Article 1, Section 1, New Jersey State Constitution

## **Police expert: War on terror has turned our cops into occupying armies - and we're the enemy**

The war on terror has essentially turned police into occupying armies in some American communities, said a police and criminology expert.

Thomas Nolan, an associate professor of criminology at Merrimack College and former policy analyst with the Department of Homeland Security, said the focus of police work had shifted greatly since he was a Boston police officer in the 1980s and 1990s.

"I remember it being drilled into me as a police officer, as a sergeant and then as a lieutenant: partnership, problem-solving, and prevention – the three Ps," Nolan said Wednesday during a panel sponsored by the American Constitution Society.

He said police were trained to form alliances to help them to better serve and protect communities, and he said those relationships clearly don't exist in Ferguson, Missouri.

While the war on drugs is frequently cited as a major factor in the breakdown of civil liberties and police-community relations, Nolan said a more recent shift was largely to blame.

"Particularly after 9/11, we saw a paradigm shift from community policing and problem-oriented principles to the war on terror, and we became Homeland Security police," said Nolan.

He said this shift toward "homeland security" quickly destroyed the relationships police had worked nearly two decades to build.

"If you dress police officers up as soldiers and you put them in military vehicles and you give them military weapons, they adopt a warrior

mentality," he continued. "We fight wars against enemies, and the enemies are the people who live in our cities – particularly in communities of color."

At the same time police began to focus on homeland security, the Department of Defense began selling surplus military weapons and gear to police departments without much public debate.

"We weren't included in the discussion, we didn't know anything about it, and I think Ferguson has brought that into the glare of the public spotlight," Nolan said.

The 27-year police veteran said officers make him feel unsafe when he walks around his own diverse neighborhood in Boston.

"I see the police conducting themselves in a highly militaristic fashion on routine patrol – and I know that's what they're doing because I come from that world," Nolan said. "What I experience and what people on the street experience is a palpable, tangible sense of fear, and that is that we are unsafe if police need semiautomatic rifles to protect us and to keep us safe."

He said Americans have found themselves in danger from their own police officers because they did not object to previous abuses – and he said the police response to the Boston Marathon bombing proves the situation can only get worse.

"What we saw in that aftermath was the unilateral suspension of the United States Constitution, and particularly the Fourth Amendment," Nolan said.

"We saw for the first time that I can recall in the United States of America house-to-house searches," he continued, "and what I said to some colleagues of mine, who work in the

news media, that when we fail to object to what's going on now, and we did, we forfeited our right to do so in the future – and we have." --  
[www.rawstory.com](http://www.rawstory.com) 2014/11/14

## **MRAPs and Bayonets: What We Know about the Pentagon's 1033 Program**

Amid widespread criticism of the deployment of military-grade weapons and vehicles by police in Ferguson, Mo., President Obama recently ordered a review of federal efforts supplying equipment to local law enforcement agencies.

So, NPR obtained data from the Pentagon on every military item sent to local, state and federal agencies through the Pentagon's Law Enforcement Support Office – known as the 1033 program – from 2006 through April 23, 2014. The Department of Defense does not report which agencies receive each piece of equipment, but they have identified the counties that the items were shipped to.

Here's what we found: More than 600 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles (MRAPs) designed to withstand roadside bombs have been sent to local law enforcement agencies in almost every state, mostly within the past year. Los Angeles County, for example, has nine of these vehicles.

But the program is a conduit for much more than MRAPs. Since 2006, through the 1033 program, the Pentagon has also distributed: 79,288 assault rifles, 205 grenade launchers, 11,959 bayonets, 3,972 combat knives, \$124 million worth of night-vision equipment, including night-vision sniper scopes, 479 bomb detonator robots, 50

airplanes, including 27 cargo transport airplanes, 422 helicopters, more than \$3.6 million worth of camouflage gear and other "deception equipment".

Congress authorized the 1033 program in 1989 to equip local, state and federal agencies in the war on drugs. In 1996, Congress widened the program's scope to include counterterrorism. But the data do not confirm whether either of those public safety goals are, in fact, driving decisions about the distribution of equipment. Areas with large populations or high crime rates aren't necessarily receiving more or less than their share of the items. Nor is a greater amount of equipment being sent to areas along the U.S. borders or coasts, places more likely to be drug trafficking corridors or terrorist targets.

The data are merely a starting point for further exploration into why certain overstocked and surplus items are — and aren't — being requested. Questions remain about how and why they are being used, and the benefit, if any, to local law enforcement. We've provided NPR member stations with the tools to begin asking these and other questions. With reporting at the national and local levels, we will continue to follow this story.

-- National Public Radio Sept. 2, 2014

### **Illegal immigrants could receive Social Security and Medicare benefits under Obama action**

By Karen Tumulty

Under President Obama's new program to protect millions of illegal immigrants from deportation, many of them will be eligible to receive Social Security, Medicare and a wide array of other federal benefits.

11 million or more people are estimated to be living in this country illegally.

"We're going to offer the following deal: If you've with been in America more than five years. If you have children who are American citizens or [legal] residents. If you register, pass a criminal background check and you're willing to pay your fair share of taxes, you'll be able to apply to stay in this country temporarily without fear of deportation," he said.

That includes FICA taxes split between employer and employee and include 12.4 percent collected for Social Security, and 2.9 percent for Medicare.

Federal law says that people who pay the taxes and are

deemed "lawfully present in the United States" can collect benefits. They may also receive survivor and disability benefits.

White House spokesman Shawn Turner said that the estimated 5 million immigrants granted protection from deportation will not be eligible for federal benefits such as student financial aid, food stamps or housing subsidies. Nor are they eligible to purchase health insurance through the federal health-care exchange under the Affordable Care Act.

The affected Illegal immigrants will be allowed to remain in the U.S. without fear of deportation for three years at a time. Theoretically, Obama's action could be overturned by future presidents, but withdrawing such arrangements would be difficult politically.

This year, Social Security pays out about \$863 billion to more than 59 million people, with average monthly checks of \$1,294 for retirees, \$1,146 for disabled workers and \$1,244 for survivors.

It is unclear what effect adding millions of immigrants to the Social Security and Medicare systems would have, said Robert Shapiro, who was an adviser to President Bill Clinton.

In the short run, he said, it could help the programs' balance sheets because so many immigrants are still young and would not be drawing benefits.

But over the longer haul, he added, they are likely to draw more out of the system than they contribute — as is the case with nearly every Medicare recipient and with many Social Security recipients who worked low-paying jobs.

-- Washington Post November 25, 2014

### **The Crazy Land Patent Argument**

By Larry Becraft

Back in 1983 and 1984

Carol Landi popularized the idea that the land patent was the highest and best form of title and that by updating the patent in your own name, you could defeat any mortgages. This contention violated many principles of real property law and when Carol started trying to get patents for most of the land in California brought up into her own name she went to jail. Others who have raised this crazy argument lost the issue.

When Uncle Sam got lots of land from some of the original 13 colonies, as well as when he acquired more thru the Louisiana and Gadsden

Purchases, and from Mexico and Russia, he eventually sold large parts of those lands. The name of the deed used to transfer title to the first purchaser was "land patent." Once this land was transferred to the first owner and was no longer owned by the feds, it was subject to the law of the State wherein it was located. The States are constitutionally prevented from "impairing the obligation of contracts". See Art. 1, section 10, cl. 1of the U.S. Constitution.

Consequently, the States cannot enact some law impairing the contractual rights possessed by parties having an interest in real property, such as a mortgagee.

In the early '80s, Carol Landi used old, no longer effective federal laws to build an argument that a party facing foreclosure could get a copy of the original land patent for his land, "update" it by transferring the patent to himself, and by this simple process of "bringing the land patent up into your own name," defeat all mortgages, including those given by the property owner. This is a wild, baseless legal argument.

Landi used this argument against her own landlord by "patenting" the landlord's property in her own name and then suing them for ejectment; she lost. She also tried to patent large tracts of land in her attempt to become the largest landowner in California, but she was eventually convicted for slandering title and spent 9 years in jail. Her whole argument conflicts with the whole body of all state law regarding title to real property.

At the behest of some farmer clients facing foreclosure, I went with them to San Fran in 1984 to meet with Landi. I was impressed with the fact that she was a wild, loose cannon. Thereafter, she promoted her land patent argument all over the country. Those who have tried her process got nowhere, and I have posted nine cases on my website regarding her land patent argument, ranging in time from *Landi v. Phelps* 740 F.2d 710 (9<sup>th</sup> Circ. 1984) to *Federal Land Bank of Spokane v. Redwine* 755 P.2d 822 (Wash. App. 1988).

-- Email from Larry becraft@hiwaay.net 12/2/2014

### **The President re-writes the ObamaCare law- Again**

By Peggy McCaughey

On Thanksgiving eve, the Obama administration dumped reams of mind-numbing ObamaCare regulations into the Federal Register —

including yet more unilateral rewrites of the Affordable Care Act.

For one, the president is redefining what health plans are "adequate" for larger employers (100-plus workers) to offer under the Affordable Care Act. He's also "asking" insurers to pay for new benefits — while warning that, if they don't, they may be forced to.

Under the Constitution, Obama lacks any authority to change the health law, or any law. Only Congress has that power. But he's doing it, and not for the first time.

The president has made two dozen changes to his health law by executive fiat, from delaying the employer mandate to allowing people to keep health plans that don't meet ObamaCare standards.

In fact, the House of Representatives is suing him for making changes without Congress' OK.

Of course, the president says he's merely "taking executive actions to help people."

By repeatedly contradicting the letter of the Affordable Care Act, these new rules add to a pattern of lawlessness in implementing the health law — even as the administration's boldest misreading of the law is before the Supreme Court.

The issue this time, in *King v. Burwell*, is whether Obama is violating the law by handing out taxpayer-funded subsidies to ObamaCare enrollees in all 50 states. The letter of the law clearly allows subsidies only in the 14 states that established their own exchanges.

Will the justices endorse the president's rewriting of the law on ObamaCare subsidies? If so, they'll surely be facing even more cases down the line, over all his other unilateral changes to his signature statute.

— New York Post, December 2, 2014

## **Official Poisoner Dies – (1999)**

By Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair

Sidney Gottlieb, who for more than two decades managed the CIA's Technical Services Division, died on March 10 [1999]. His obituaries in the New York Times and the Washington Post tended to focus on Gottlieb's testing of LSD on himself and other CIA officers, portraying him as a kind of Merry Prankster, the CIA's very own Ken Kesey.

In fact, America has lost its prime poisoner. In the 1950s and 1960s, Gottlieb presided over the CIA's experiments in mind control and

administration of LSD and other psycho-active drugs to unwitting subjects.

Incredibly, neither the Times nor the Post obituaries mention Gottlieb's role in the death of Dr. Frank Olson, who worked for the US Army's biological weapons center at Fort Detrick. At a CIA sponsored retreat in rural Maryland on November 18, 1953, Gottlieb gave the unwitting Olson a glass of Cointreau liberally spiked with LSD. Olson developed psychotic symptoms soon thereafter and within days had plunged to his death at the New York Statler-Hilton. Olson was sharing the room with Gottlieb's number two, Robert Lashbrook, who had taken the deranged man to see a CIA-sponsored medic at Mount Sinai.

The night Olson made his abrupt descent from the hotel window the police asked Lashbrook to turn out his pockets. On a piece of paper were initials GW and MH, identified later as George White and Morgan Hall, White's alias. White ran a CIA safehouse at 81 Bedford St in Greenwich Village fitted with one-way mirrors, listening devices and secret cameras. From the fall of 1953 to the spring of 1954 White threw parties on Bedford St, dosing his guests with sodium pentothal, Nembutal and of course LSD. Later White moved the CIA operation to San Francisco. He hired prostitutes to dose the guests, in an exercise known as Operation Midnight Climax. Gottlieb flew out to visit the safe house at 225 Chestnut Street several times a year.

Gottlieb was a man of darkness. He sponsored research by the infamous Dr Ewen Cameron, a world famous shrink who had clinic in Montreal where he dosed unwitting subjects (who had entered voluntarily for psychiatric treatment) with huge jolts of electricity, plus drugs plus lobotomies. Gottlieb had finessed Cameron \$60,000 in the late Fifties for his experiments. Eventually the CIA settled with some of Cameron's victims.

Gottlieb also funded the experiments of Dr. Harris Isbell. Isbell ran the Center for Addiction Research in Lexington, Kentucky. Passing through Isbell's center was a captive group of human guinea pigs in the form of black heroin addicts. More than 800 different chemical compounds were shipped from Gottlieb to Lexington for testing on Isbell's patients.

Perhaps the most infamous experiment came when Isbell gave LSD to seven black men for seventy-seven straight days.

Gottlieb's research was never a case of pure science. He saw himself as part of the operational wing of the CIA. He arranged a contract with Eli Lilly to produce synthetic LSD "in tonnage quantities." The aim was to have enough acid to incapacitate large populations and armies.

By the early 1960s Gottlieb's techniques and potions were being fully deployed in the field. Well-known is Gottlieb's journey to the Congo, where his little black bag held an Agency-developed biotoxin scheduled for Patrice Lumumba's toothbrush. He also tried to manage Iraq's general Kassim with a handkerchief doctored with botulinum. There were endless poisons directed at Fidel Castro, from the LSD the Agency wanted to spray in his radio booth to the poisonous fountain pen handed by a CIA man to Rolando Cubela on November 22, 1963.

Less well remembered is one mission in the CIA's Phoenix Program in Vietnam in 1968. A team of CIA psychologists set up shop at Bien Hoa Prison outside Saigon, where NLF suspects were being held. The psychologists performed a variety of experiments on the prisoners. In one, three prisoners were anaesthetized; their skulls were opened and electrodes implanted by CIA doctors into different parts of their brains. The prisoners were revived, placed in a room with knives and the electrodes in the brains activated by the psychiatrists, who were covertly observing them. The hope was that they could be prompted to attack each other. The experiments failed. The electrodes were removed, the patients were shot and their bodies burned.

-- counterpunch.org June 15, 1999

## **Meet Alfreda Bikowsky, the Senior Officer at the Center of the CIA's Torture Scandals**

By Glenn Greenwald and Peter Maass

NBC News yesterday called her a "key apologist" for the CIA's torture program. A follow-up New Yorker article dubbed her "The Unidentified Queen of Torture" and in part "the model for the lead character in 'Zero Dark Thirty.'" Yet in both articles she was anonymous.

The person described by both NBC and The New Yorker is senior CIA officer Alfreda Frances Bikowsky.

Bikowsky played a key role in misleading Congress about the agency's use of torture, and her active participation (including playing a direct

part in the torture of at least one innocent detainee).

The executive summary of the torture report released by the Senate last week provides abundant documentation that the CIA repeatedly and deliberately misled Congress about multiple aspects of its interrogation program.

The New Yorker's Jane Mayer wrote that the officer "is still in a position of high authority over counterterrorism at the C.I.A." This officer, Mayer noted, is the same one who "dropped the ball when the C.I.A. was given information that might very well have prevented the 9/11 attacks; she misinterpreted intelligence in such a way that it sent the C.I.A. on an absurd chase for Al Qaeda sleeper cells in Montana. And then she falsely told congressional overseers that the torture worked."

Earlier this year, The Washington Post identified Bikowsky by name, describing her as a CIA analyst "who was tied to a critical intelligence-sharing failure before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the botched 2003 'rendition' of an innocent German citizen thought to be an al-Qaeda operative."

Back in 2011, John Cook, the outgoing editor of The Intercept, wrote an article at Gawker, naming Bikowsky and pointing to her key role in the CIA's pre-9/11 failure to notify the FBI that two known al Qaeda operatives had entered the country.

Earlier that year, the Associated Press reported that despite internal recommendations that she be punished, she instead "has risen to one of the premier jobs in the CIA's Counterterrorism Center."

A CIA spokesperson, Ryan Trapani, argued that the Senate report is "based only upon one side's perspective on this story." When The Intercept asked for the CIA's rebuttal—or Bikowsky's—Trapani declined to offer one. He noted that CIA Director John Brennan had disputed the report's contention that the agency had misrepresented the value of the interrogation program.

-- The Intercept 20 Dec 14

## **Why the Founding Fathers Thought Banning Torture Foundational to the US Constitution**

By Juan Cole, Informed Comment

The Bill of Rights of the US Constitution is full of prohibitions on torture, as part of a general 18th century Enlightenment turn against the

practice. The French Encyclopedia and its authors had agitated in this direction.

Two types of torture were common during the lifetimes of the Founding Fathers. In France, the judiciary typically had arrestees tortured to make them confess their crime. This way of proceeding rather tilted the scales in the direction of conviction, but against justice. Pre-trial torture was abolished in France in 1780. But torture was still used after the conviction of the accused to make him identify his accomplices.

When the 5th amendment of the Constitution says "nor shall [the accused person] be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself" the word "compelled" is referring to the previous practice of judicial torture of the accused by England and European powers. Accused persons who "take the fifth" are thus exercising a right not to be tortured by the government into confessing to something they may or may not have done.

Likewise, the 8th Amendment, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted" is intended to forbid post-sentencing torture.

The 8th Amendment was pushed for by Patrick Henry and George Mason.

In the Virginia Ratifying Convention debate in 1788 Patrick Henry said, "What has distinguished our ancestors?—That they would not admit of tortures, or cruel and barbarous punishment. But Congress may introduce the practice of the civil law, in preference to that of the common law. They may introduce the practice of France, Spain, and Germany."

It was objected in the debate over the Bill of Rights that it could be ignored. George Mason thought that was a stupid reason not to enact it:

"Mr. Nicholas: . . . But the gentleman says that, by this Constitution, they have power to make laws to define crimes and prescribe punishments; and that, consequently, we are not free from torture. . . . If we had no security against torture but our declaration of rights, we might be tortured to-morrow; for it has been repeatedly infringed and disregarded.

"Mr. George Mason replied that the worthy gentleman was mistaken in his assertion that the bill of rights did not prohibit torture; for that one clause expressly provided that no

man can give evidence against himself; and that the worthy gentleman must know that, in those countries where torture is used, evidence was extorted from the criminal himself. Another clause of the bill of rights provided that no cruel and unusual punishments shall be inflicted; therefore, torture was included in the prohibition."

It was the insistence of the Founding Fathers such as George Mason and Patrick Henry that resulted in the Bill of Rights being passed to constrain the otherwise absolute power of the Federal government. And one of their primary concerns was to abolish torture.

The 5th and the 8th amendments thus together forbid torture on the "question préparatoire" (pre-trial confession under duress) and the question préalable (post-conviction torture).

That the Founding Fathers were against torture is not in question.

Fascists (that is what they are) who support torture will cavil. Is waterboarding torture? Is threatening to sodomize a man with a broomstick torture? Is menacing a prisoner with a pistol torture?

Patrick Henry's discourse makes all this clear. He was concerned about the government doing anything to detract from the dignity of the English commoner, who had defied the Norman yoke and gained the right not to be coerced through pain into relinquishing liberties.

Fascists will argue that the Constitution does not apply to captured foreign prisoners of war, or that the prisoners were not even P.O.W.s, having been captured out of uniform.

But focusing on the category of the prisoner is contrary to the spirit of the founding fathers. Their question was, 'what are the prerogatives of the state?' And their answer was that the state does not have the prerogative to torture. It may not torture anyone, even a convicted murderer.

The framers of the Geneva Convention (to which the US is signatory) were, moreover, determined that all prisoners fall under some provision of international law.

But if our discussion focuses on the Founding Fathers, it isn't even necessary to look so closely at the Geneva Conventions.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these

are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The phrase "all men" means all persons of any nationality.

We know what the Founding Fathers believed. They believed in universal rights. And they believed in basic principles of human dignity. Above all, they did not think the government had the prerogative of behaving as it pleased. It doesn't have the prerogative to torture.

-- readersupportednews.org 10 Dec 14

## **Gun Ban at the N.C. State Fair Is Painfully Ironic.**

Here's a story that supports the old saying, "When you criminalize guns, only criminals will have guns."

Two people leaving the North Carolina State Fair on Saturday were robbed at gunpoint, after a legal battle had enabled the fair to be declared a "gun-free" zone, WATE-TV reported.

It would be "unwise and imprudent" to allow concealed weapons at the state fair, Wake County Superior Court judge Donald Stephens said earlier as he ruled against allowing concealed firearms at the event.

Opponents of the gun ban claimed that the ban was illegal in the first place.

"By announcing to violent predators that people attending the state fair would be unable to protect themselves, the responsibility for this armed robbery lies squarely with Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler, who illegally banned concealed [firearms] at the fair, and...Stephens, who willfully misinterpreted the law to impose his own worldview," Paul Valone, president of Grass Roots North Carolina, told Guns.com.

Valone had argued the case in front of Stephens that the state fair gun ban violated a law passed by the state legislature that expanded concealed carry rights. Stephens acknowledged that allowing concealed weapons "may chill crime," but he upheld the ban regardless.

"As we've seen, gun-free zones are dangerous places for law-abiding citizens," Valone said.

--www.theblaze.com Oct. 29, 2014

## **You Can Kill, But Not Murder: The Case for the Ten Commandments**

By Dennis Prager

Ask almost anyone to recite which of the Ten Commandments prohibits taking a life and you will be told, "Thou Shall Not Kill."

That is the King James translation of the sixth commandment. It is a magnificent translation. But it has led to much moral confusion.

Yesterday, PragerUniversity.com released 11 video courses (each five-minutes long) -- the Ten Commandments and an introduction.

The video on commandment six explains why the King James translation is wrong:

Because the Hebrew original does not say, "Do not kill." It says, "Do not murder." Both Hebrew and English have two words for taking a life -- one is "kill" (harag, in Hebrew) and the other is "murder" (ratzach in Hebrew).

The difference between the two is enormous. Kill means:

- 1) Taking any life -- whether of a human being or an animal.
- 2) Taking a human life deliberately or by accident.
- 3) Taking a human life legally or illegally, morally or immorally.

On the other hand, murder can only mean one thing: The illegal or immoral taking of a human life. That's why we say that "the worker was accidentally killed," not that "the worker was accidentally murdered."

So why did the King James translation of the Bible use the word "kill" rather than "murder"? Because 400 years ago, in 1610, when the translation was made, "kill" was synonymous with "murder." As a result, some people today think that the Ten Commandments prohibits all killing.

But, of course, it doesn't. If it did, we would all have to be vegetarians, as killing animals would be prohibited; and we would all have to be pacifists -- since we could not kill even in self-defense.

Also, the very same part of the Bible that contains the Ten Commandments -- the Five Books of Moses, the Torah as it is known by Jews -- commands the death penalty for murder, allows killing in war, prescribes animal sacrifice and allows eating meat.

There is moral killing -- most obviously when done in self-defense against an aggressor -- and there is immoral killing. And the word for that is "murder."

The next time you hear someone cite, "Do not kill" when quoting the sixth commandment, gently but firmly explain that it actually says, "Do not murder." -- townhall.com 2014/12/02

## **Docs: Adviser Tells AG Holder How to Manipulate Press on Fast & Furious**

Lesson in how the administration attempts to manipulate the press and news coverage: Fast and Furious email to Attorney General Eric Holder from a communications adviser, Oct. 5, 2011. (President Obama withheld this email under executive privilege but it was recently released as a result of a lawsuit filed by Judicial Watch against the Justice Department). p. 733

Matthew Miller to Attorney General Holder:

1. Send a letter to the Hill explaining what happened. Put in context the amount of information you get every week, say that you don't recall reading those bullets or being aware of Fast and Furious at any time before early this year, but in any event, you certainly weren't aware of the gun walking aspect of it until the news broke earlier this year (at which point you took immediate steps to have the IG investigate, etc.). This needs to happen tomorrow. In fact, it should've happened today. The last time your credibility was directly questioned was whether you had disclosed all of your amicus briefs -- the story started to break on a Thursday night, and we made people stay up all night compiling information so we could get a response out by 1 pm or so on Friday.

2. Find a way for you to get in front of a reporter or two about this. You don't want to call a press conference on this because it will blow things out perspective, but if you have any events in the next few days (preferably tomorrow), you could find a way to take two or three questions on it afterwards. Or if that's not easily doable, you could find a way to "run into" a couple of reporters on your way to something. Maybe Pete Williams, Carrie, Pete Yost -- that part can be managed. Most important is that you're in front of a camera in a relaxed manner giving a response you have rehearsed...It would be ideal if those two things happened in the same day so you didn't have two news cycles of responding -- you want to do it all at once. There may be things you need to do to go on offense as well, but I think most important right now is that you answer the charge about covering this up. Then you can move to offense.... -- <http://sharylattkisson.com> Nov. 22, 2014

*Sharyl Attkisson is an Emmy award winning investigative journalist. She is author of Stonewalled:*

## **In Ferguson, Oath Keepers Draw Both Suspicion and Gratitude**

By Brian Heffernan

Two days after looters smashed the glass storefront of the dentistry that Marilyn Crider manages in Ferguson, MO, she was greeted by a pair of unexpected guests.

They wore military fatigues and had rifles. "I think they said something like, 'And you are?'" and I said, "I work here. Who are you?"

The men called themselves Oath Keepers and said one of the dentists had given them a key. They had been guarding the building.

Since Nov. 25, members of the group — many of them armed — have been patrolling rooftops and sidewalks in the St. Louis suburb. Oath Keepers, regarded by some as a militia — although they reject that characterization — is made up of current and former members of the military, law enforcement and fire departments and other first responders. It has billed itself as an volunteer security force bent on protecting businesses, residents and the rights of peaceful protesters in the wake of violence after a grand jury decision not to indict police officer Darren Wilson for the Aug. 9 shooting of unarmed black teen Michael Brown. The group says there are about 35,000 members nationwide.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization that tracks extremist and hate groups, listed the Oath Keepers as an active "patriot" group in 2013. Ryan Lenz, senior writer for the center, says Oath Keepers is an anti-government group but not a hate group. It is largely motivated by fears that an overzealous government will disregard the U.S. Constitution and strip citizens' rights.

The groups' website says members have taken oaths to "support and defend the constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, so help

us God."

In Mother Jones magazine, Justine Sharrock said the group is difficult to broadly characterize: "I've toggled between viewing them either as potentially dangerous conspiracy theorists or as crafty intellectuals with the savvy to rally politicians to their side. They cover the whole spectrum."

The Oath Keepers' presence drew ire from police, who ordered the group down from rooftops — orders the Oath Keepers defied on subsequent nights.

Protests turned violent after the St. Louis County grand jury decision. Looters ransacked dozens of storefronts, and arsonists torched several cars and nearly 10 buildings in Ferguson and the neighboring city of Dellwood.

The destruction left some residents wondering why the National Guard, which Gov. Jay Nixon had called in nearly a week earlier, had not been there to protect their businesses.

Local Oath Keepers leader Sam Andrews said, "We bought some plywood with our own money, and we came up here and we boarded up all these windows. And we talked to each owner and said if ... everyone agrees, we will put a team of people together and defend your business."

Andrews said business owners from "all over the community" have asked the Oath Keepers to guard their businesses because Nixon and St. Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar "have failed them so dramatically."

Threatened with arrest for violating a county ordinance that requires private security guards to be licensed, the Oath Keepers temporarily left their positions but returned, contending the rule doesn't apply to them as volunteers.

Andrews recoils at the organization's being labeled a militia. "The fact is the Oath Keepers believe, as a group, that our country should follow our written laws," he says. "We're not a militia, and we're not right-wing radicals."

Nor is the group racially motivated, according to E. Stewart Rhodes, a Yale Law School graduate

and former Ron Paul staffer who founded the group in 2009.

"I'm a quarter Mexican, so it's kind of hard for me to be a white supremacist," Rhodes told Al Jazeera in an interview. "And we have black members, and we're guarding a black lady's bakery ... So why would we do that if we're some kind of racist organization?"

On Saturday, Andrews stopped into the bakery Natalie's Cakes and More to speak with owner Natalie Dubose to tell her that he would have a small, unarmed presence in front of the building.

"Awesome," Dubose said. "Everyone on the Twitter and Facebook page, they're loving that you guys are here."

Outside, Andrews said the group began changing its strategy to appear less intimidating and militarized.

"What the men want is respect. What the women want is love. And when you come up to people on the street and you tell them 'I respect you, and I respect your right to protest,' they get tears in their eyes. And when you tell the women, 'We're not here to hurt you. We love you, and we're here to protect you from the police,' they start crying. It's a stunning reaction."

Now the Oath Keepers rarely wear fatigues, carry rifles or take high-ground positions. Rooftop posts have been replaced with drive-by security patrols, Andrews said.

-- Al Jazeera America 14 Dec 14

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Congress have no power to disarm the militia. Their swords, and every other terrible implement of the soldier, are the birthright of an American. What clause in the state or [federal] constitution hath given away that important right...The unlimited power of the sword is not in the hands of either the federal or state governments, but where I trust in God it will ever remain, in the hands of the people." — Tench Coxe [1755-1824], in a letter to the Philadelphia Gazette of Feb. 20, 1788

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[www.njmilitia.org](http://www.njmilitia.org)

[info@njmilitia.org](mailto:info@njmilitia.org)

[walnor@keepandbeararms.com](mailto:walnor@keepandbeararms.com)

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